

NEESIELLA - A NEW GENUS OF ACANTHACEAE

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Andrographideae (Subfam. Ruelleoideae) contain a small number of genera confined to Tropical Asia. Bremekamp in 1948 (Verh. Nederl. Akad. Wet. (II) 45(2):20) and again in 1961 (Dansk. bot. ark. 20:77) has emphasised the need for a proper delimitation of the genera of this tribe. Materials are being collected for a monograph of this group, and a preliminary survey of available specimens and literature supports his view.

While studying materials of the genus Andrographis Wall. ex Nees, the consistently 4-seeded capsules of A. echio-
ides (Linn.) Nees prompted me to re-examine its taxonomic status. There is now convincing evidence to show that its inclusion in Andrographis is anomalous and hence it is made the type of a new genus. This new genus, Neesiella, is named after C.G.Nees von Esenbeck who had suspected the unnatural position of this species as early as 1832. His description (in Wall.Pl.As.Rar.3:117) runs as follows: 'Herbacea, hirsuta, foliis oblongis, subsessilibus, subcrenatis, racemis reflexis, capsulis tetraspermis. Genus probabiliter novum'. Neesiella is provisionally retained in Andrographideae.

Neesiella Sreem. gen. nov. pertinet ad Acanthaceas, Andrographideas, affinisque est Andrographidi Wall. ex Nees a qua differt calycis laciniis longioribus et persistentibus, polline maiore, capsulis minoribus ellipticis et semper 4-seminatis.

Herbae erectae, ramosae vel secus, culmis quadrangularibus. Folia opposita, sessilia vel subsessilia, oblonga, lanceata vel ovato-lanceata, sparse vel dense villosa in utraque pagina, cystolithis minutis. Flores in cymas axillares dispositi; bracteae parvae, lineares; bracteolae minutae; calyx 5-partitus, laciniis liberis fere usque ad basin, subaequalibus, elongatis sub fructu; corolla gibbosa, bilabiata, labio superiore minutim ad apicem bifido, labio inferiore trifido, alte purpureo intus; stamina 2; antherae barbatae; pollinis grana magna 3-colporata; ovarium bicellulare, ovulis binis in utraque cellula. Capsulae ellipticae, compressae, ad utrumque apicem acutae, seminibus 4, paulum compressis, rugose foveolatis, glabris.

¹The author is indebted to Dr.H.Santapau for translating the descriptions into Latin.

Typus: Neesiella echioides (Linn.) Sreem. Comb.nov. Justicia echioides Linn. Sp. Pl. 16, 1753. Andrographis echioides (Linn.) Nees in Wall. Pl. As. Rar. 3:117, 1832 & DC. Prod. 11:518, 1847 (pro parte); Clarke in Fl. Brit. India 4:505, 1884; Lindau in Engl. & Prantl, Pflanzenfamilien 4(3B): 323, 1895; Santapau in Mem. Univ. Bombay 2:51, 1951.

For the present I recognise two species: N. echioides (Linn.) Sreem. and N. longipedunculata Sreem. spec. nov. These are distinguished on the basis of leaf shape, nature and size of the peduncle and size of the fruiting calyx. Delimitation of specific and infraspecific taxa within this genus can be finalised only after a comprehensive study of a large number of representative specimens from as many localities as possible.

N. longipedunculata Sreem. spec.nov. affinis N. echioidi (Linn.) Sreem., a qua differt foliis lanceatis vel ovato-lanceatis, inflorescentia profuse ramosa et multo longiore, calyce persistente, quam capsula dimidio brevior.

Herba erecta, 20-40 cm alta, culmis quadrangulatis sulcatis, ± glandularibus vel albo-pilosis. Folia 2-6 x 0.5-2 cm, opposita, sessilia vel subsessilia, lanceata vel ovato-lanceata, acuta vel subacuta ad apicem, obtusa vel subcordata ad basin, albopilosa in utraque pagina, cystolithis minutis aspersis in pagina superiore, nervis 5-7 jugis. Flores in cymas axillares ramosas dichasiales dispositi, 3-12 cm longi; bracteae lineares acutae dense glandulari-hispidae; bracteolae minutae; pedicellis brevissimis; calyce 5-partito, laciniis 3-5 x 0.75 mm, subaequalibus, ad basin fere liberis, intus glabris, extus glandulari-hispidis, in fructu elongatis; corolla 1-1.2 cm longa, gibbosa, bilabiata fere ad dimidium, intus pubescente, extus glandulari-hispida; labio superiore ovato, minutim bifido ad apicem, labio inferiore 3-lobo, lobo medio caeteris longiore, alte purpureo intus; stamina 2, filamenta sparse pilosa, antherae subcohaerentes, purpureae, dense albo-barbatae ad basin; ovarium bicellulare, ovulis binis in utraque cellula, stylo lineari, stigmati simplici. Capsulae 1-1.2 x 0.3-0.4 cm, ellipticae ad apicem, acutae sparse pilosae, seminibus 4, 2-3 x 1-1.5 mm, lateraliter paulum compressis, rugose foveolatis glabris.

Typus: India, Maharashtra, Nagpur, K. Subramanyam 4696A (Hoto typus in CAL) and K. Subramanyam 4696B-G (Isotypi in MH).